

Transitional Justice and Social Cohesion in Postwar Societies

The Case of Peru

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Resumen

The paper explores the effects of transitional justice instruments on the development of social cohesion in postwar societies. The question of how to deal with past wrongdoings, victims and perpetrators rises in every postwar society and is crucial for the social and institutional settlement. However, there are only few studies and still no understanding about how transitional justice processes influence the development of the society. This paper contributes to this research gap. I develop an indicator which measures social cohesion and propose an analytical approach for the analysis of these processes. The indicator is applied in a sub-national comparison using the example of the Peruvian truth and reconciliation commission to analyze whether there are differences in the level of social cohesion caused by the transitional justice processes. Important factors for the impact are the design and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms. The analysis contributes to the understanding of positive or negative effects of national and local transitional justice instruments. It therefore contributes to the discussion of postwar stability and development. The analysis is based on field data collected in eight provinces of Peru in 2014-2015. Summarized, the sub-national comparison suggests that whereas the commission was able to support the development of democracy and political trust in some regions, there are setbacks in other areas. The Peruvian society still shows the existence of different cleavages, resulting in an ongoing challenge for enhancing social cohesion and democracy.